

Message Text

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44

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 SCCT-01 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

EB-07 SY-05 FAA-00 DOTE-00 /092 W

----- 045640

R 090835Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6574

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

USINT BAGHDAD UNN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN NY

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON UK

COMMSIXTHFLT

CTF SIX ZERO

CTF SIX ONE

CTF SIX TWO

FOSIF ROTA SPAIN

FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA

DIA WASHDC

CIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 12562

E.O. 11652: GDS

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TAGS: PINS, PINT, LE

SUBJECT: TERRORIST ATTACK AT BEIRUT AIRPORT OCTOBER 4

REF: BEIRUT 12387 (BEIRUT 4 OCT 75 0620Z)

1. PIECING TOGETHER INFO FROM SEVERAL SOURCES, WE SUMMARIZE BELOW OUR CURRENT READING OF THE TERRORIST INCIDENT AT BEIRUT INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT OCT 4.

2. AT ABOUT 0530 HOURS, FOUR MEN DROVE UP TO MAIN ENTRANCE OF AIRPORT IN A MERCEDES CAR. THREE GOT OUT CARRYING AUTOMATIC WEAPONS EITHER FULLY VISIBLE OR PARTLY HIDDEN IN BAGS, AND DRIVER SPED AWAY. THE THREE IMMEDIATELY OPENED FIRE THROUGH GLASS ENTRYWAY, THEN RAN INTO MAIN LOBBY STILL FIRING. SECURITY POLICE RETURNED FIRE. RESULT OF BRIEF SHOOT-OUT WAS: ONE TERRORIST KILLED, TWO WOUNDED; ONE SECURITY POLICEMAN KILLED, ONE WOUNDED; ONE BYSTANDER KILLED, SEVEN WOUNDED. (STATISTICS ON BYSTANDER CASUALTIES ARE NOT CONFIRMED.)

3. TWO WOUNDED TERRORISTS THEN RAN OUT TO TARMAC. ONE FLED ONTO PARKED MEA PLANE; OTHER FLED TO END OF FIELD AND HID. BOTH WERE EVENTUALLY FLUSHED OUT AND CAPTURED. INCIDENT WAS DECLARED FINISHED AS OF APPROX 0930 HOURS. AIRCRAFT, WHICH HAD BEEN WARNED NOT TO LAND AFTER SHOOTING BEGAN, RESUMED REGULAR LANDINGS AT APPROX 0945 HOURS.

4. DRIVER OF TERRORISTS' CAR WAS LATER TURNED OVER TO AUTHORITIES BY PLO'S PALESTINIAN ARMED STRUGGLE COMMAND.

5. IDENTITY OF TERRORISTS WAS IN QUESTION FOR SOME TIME. IT WAS EVENTUALLY ESTABLISHED THAT THEY HAD TIES TO FATAH ORGANIZATION BUT ACTED WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE OF FATAH/PLO LEADERSHIP. THE PLO QUICKLY CONDEMNED THE TERRORISTS' ACTION IN PUBLIC STATEMENT. THE ATTACKERS WERE APPARANTLY FATAH DISSIDENTS HAVING "REJECTIONIST" SYMPATHIES. ONE WAS PALESTINIAN, ONE EGYPTIAN, ONE SYRIAN, AND ONE LEBANESE.

6. MOTIVE IS STILL UNCLEAR, ESPECIALLY BECAUSE OF SEEMING SUICIDE NATURE AND HAPHAZARD PLANNING OF ATTACK. ONE VERSION IS THAT TERRORISTS WISHED TO HIJACK AN EGYPTIAN CONFIDENTIAL

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COMMERCIAL AIRCRAFT TO PROTEST SINAI ACCORD, BUT THE EGYPT AIR FLIGHT WAS NOT DUE UNTIL APPROX 0800 HOURS AND SO HAD NOT ARRIVED WHEN INCIDENT OCCURRED. HIJACKING SEEMS UNLIKELY MOTIVE IN ANY CASE, SINCE WEAPONS WERE CARELESSLY CONCEALED AND SHOOTING STARTED AT ENTRY TO BUILDING FAR FROM AIRCRAFT. CONCEIVABLY TERRORISTS WERE MISINFORMED ABOUT EGYPTIAN FLIGHT AND HAD MISTAKEN BELIEF THAT AIRPORT AN EASY MARK AT THAT EARLY HOUR, BUT MORE

PLAUSIBLE MOTIVE IS THAT ATTACKERS SIMPLY WISHED TO KEEP
BEIRUT SCENE IN TURMOIL AND DISCREDIT AIRPORT AS INTER-
NATIONAL FLIGHT CENTER.
GODLEY

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